



EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION TO ENGAGE EVERY LEARNER:
A RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT TOOL

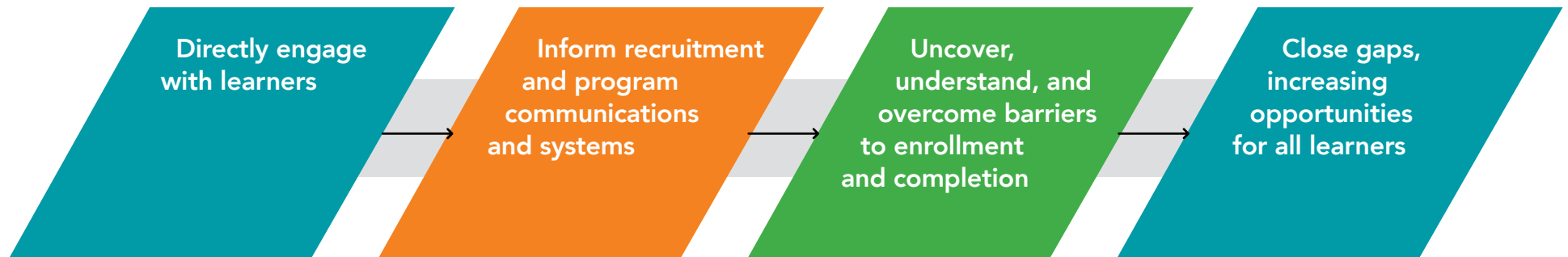
INTRODUCTION

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) requires states to use **data analysis, funding, technical assistance, professional development,** and **regular engagement of stakeholders** representing learners with special population status to ensure that all learners can have access to and succeed in high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, especially learners who are currently underrepresented in these programs. For example, each state is required to use at least 0.1% of its state leadership funds, or \$50,000, whichever is less, to recruit special populations into CTE programs.

Perkins V introduced the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), and while the specific details of the CLNA may vary by state, in all cases it calls for districts and institutions to share information on how they are making data-informed decisions to close enrollment and participation gaps.

The Effectively Communicating CTE to Engage Every Learner Recruitment and Engagement Tool:

- offers multichannel methods for building and applying knowledge for engaging with and creating communications for specific audiences.
- provides a flexible step-by-step process for state and local CTE leaders to build meaningful relationships with focus populations, increase partner engagement, and develop ongoing cycles for enrollment data analysis to create more effective CTE recruitment and program communications for all learners.
- produces insights to understand and overcome learner barriers to CTE program enrollment, participation, and completion and connects the aforementioned levers.



HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The section numbers and names in this workbook correspond to the videos in the *Effectively Communicating CTE to Engage Every Learner* video series.

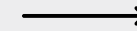
For example, Section 1: Getting Started corresponds with the first video of the video series. After viewing each video, complete the corresponding section of the workbook.

This tool can be customized to the individual needs and resources of each user, whether on a local, regional, or state level. This workbook is also able to be used multiple times to focus on different state and local audiences of populations underrepresented in CTE.

The workbook contains some functional features to help make it accessible and easy to use, such as:

Example

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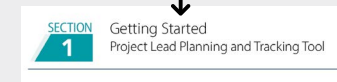


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The Contents page contains clickable links to the different sections and activities within the workbook.

CLICK HERE



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SECTION

1

GETTING STARTED



Objectives

- ✓ Gain an understanding of the overall project purpose, content, and approximate timelines with key project roles for each stage of this engagement and communications work in *Video 1: Getting Started*.
- ✓ Determine assignments for project functions.
- ✓ Begin to plan the desired timeline for completion of each section.
- ✓ Become familiar with the terminology used via the glossary section.

Preparation

Watch *Video 1: Getting Started* and download the video transcript.



VIDEO



TRANSCRIPT

This tool can be customized to the individual needs and resources of each user, whether on a local, regional, or state level. Below is a sample timeline defining the minimum anticipated time needed to complete the specific sections of the workbook. This timeline is a guide and should be adjusted to the specific needs of each user.





Designate Key Project Functions

Instructions

Use the following chart to identify who from your team will perform the key project functions.

These functions can be customized to fit the needs of your specific team. In some cases, one person may cover multiple functions; in other cases, one or more people may be assigned per function. You can find a detailed description of each function in the video and the accompanying video transcript.

Functions	Name(s)	Email	Notes
Project lead			
Outreach and engagement (can be broken out into separate functions as desired)			
Learner representative(s)			
Marketing/communications liaison/lead			
Senior leadership or administrator			

Project Lead Planning and Tracking Tool

Instructions

Use the Project Lead Planning and Tracking Tool to determine the ideal start and end dates of tasks and who connected to the project will be responsible. Please note that the times listed (e.g., “Est Time: 2 Weeks”) represent estimates and the minimum amount of time suggested for completing that phase of the project. The timeline can be adjusted to best meet the resources and needs of the project team. As the work progresses, this tool can also be used to track the progress of the work by completing the “Status” column. Use the “Notes/Lessons Learned” column to record what worked, what did not work, and thoughts on routines or actions needed to sustain the work throughout each phase of the project.

PROJECT LEAD PLANNING AND TRACKING TOOL

Getting Started	Est Time: 2 Weeks	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 1					
	SECTION 1 workbook					
	Identify data source for naming underrepresented groups in CTE					
Building Meaningful Relationships	Est Time: 1 Month	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 2					
	SECTION 2 workbook					
	Conduct relationship-building actions					
Changing the Narrative With Asset-Based Framing	Est Time: 2 Weeks	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 3					
	SECTION 3 workbook					
	Continue relationship-building actions					

PROJECT LEAD PLANNING AND TRACKING TOOL CONTINUED

Getting to Know Your Audience	Est Time: 2 Months	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 4					
	SECTION 4 workbook (preengagement)					
	Directly engage with the audience (survey, focus groups, advisory group)					
	SECTION 4 workbook (postengagement)					
Maximizing Effective Communications	Est Time: 1 Month	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 5					
	SECTION 5 workbook					
	Continue direct engagement with the audience (survey, focus groups, advisory group)					
Developing, Tailoring, and Testing Messages	Est Time: 2 Months	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 6					
	SECTION 6 workbook					
	Directly engage with the audience for feedback on messages					
	Update messages					
	Disseminate messages					
Continuing the Work	Est Time: 6+ months	Start Date	End Date	Who Is Responsible	Status	Notes/Lessons Learned
	VIDEO 7					
	SECTION 7 workbook					
	Test messages					
	Evaluate data					
	Directly engage with the audience					

Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

What are the biggest potential risks to project completion and timeliness?

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Discuss project functions assignments, ideal team members, and timeline with senior leadership or your administrator.
- ✓ Onboard individuals connected to the project and share *Video 1: Getting Started*.
- ✓ Identify competing priorities and timelines among key project members to inform and adjust the project schedule.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 2: Building Meaningful Relationships*.

VIDEO



VIDEO



SECTION 2

BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS



Objectives

- ✓ Gain knowledge about how building meaningful relationships is important to enhance the efficacy of recruitment and communications efforts in *Video 2: Building Meaningful Relationships*.
- ✓ Assess current relationship-building efforts with up to four underrepresented populations.
- ✓ Identify one focus population through the heat map to use in subsequent sections.

Building Meaningful Relationships Actions Assessment Tool

Instructions

Use the Building Meaningful Relationships Actions Assessment Tool to create a heat map to identify at least one population you would most like to focus on building or strengthening a relationship with in subsequent sections. List an identifying name for each population at the top of the following chart. For each population, select the dropdown category that best describes the current status of the relationship-building action. The populations named in this chart should be reflective of up to four populations who are underrepresented in your CTE programs based on enrollment and participation data.

Preparation

Watch *Video 2: Building Meaningful Relationships* and download the video transcript.



Gather CTE program enrollment and participation data, available through your state data dashboard or consolidated annual report (CAR) data, and identify up to four groups or populations that are currently underrepresented in your CTE programs.

- The [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network \(PCRN\) data explorer](#) is a great resource for enrollment, concentrator, and performance data that are disaggregated by special population and searchable by state.
- As an additional resource, Advance CTE has basic enrollment data available via [CTE in Your State](#).

Relationship-Building Action	Population 1 Name:	Population 2 Name:	Population 3 Name:	Population 4 Name:
Discover the population's values and vision for the future				
Determine alignment of values and vision for the future with CTE communications				
Identify who will serve as the outreach coordinator for the state, district, or institution with this population				
Identify community members to regularly connect with (should include community leaders, learners and families, and faculty and staff from or that engage with the focus population)				
Conduct regular meetings with the community members identified in the previous row				
Attend community meetings and events				
Co-host CTE-themed events				
Discover perceptions of CTE				
Establish and implement regular, consistent channels of communication using the population's preferred channels and format				
Create and implement a process for two-way communication (feedback, questions) for all communications				
Establish and implement a process for including members of the population in ongoing planning and decisionmaking to include regular input on process, program, and recruitment materials				
Establish and implement a process for including learners from the population in ongoing planning and decisionmaking to include regular input on process, programs, and recruitment materials				
Engage the population in the Perkins V state plan process (public comment, CLNA, etc.) as applicable				
Update recruitment and communication materials to represent the population in images that are reflective of their values, language, perceptions of CTE, vision, etc.				
Regularly inform staff on lessons learned and the status of engagement with the population				
Provide joint professional development/training events to increase knowledge of CTE and engagement in the recruitment process				
Document lessons learned to inform relationship-building and engagement efforts that can be shared with other institutions/districts				

Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

Which populations (columns) or actions (rows) had more red, “not currently” responses than expected? What components of these actions might be a challenge to implement or have been implemented with limited success?

Which actions (rows) had the most green, “continuously” responses? What components of these actions or previous work have made these actions green as opposed to others that are red or yellow?

Based on the heat map and your reflection in the previous questions, which population will you focus your engagement efforts on for recruitment communications? While narrowing the focus to one population at a time is important, this tool is designed to be used multiple times with multiple populations.

Focus population:

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Based on your reflections, determine at least one short-term and one long-term relationship-building action that you could take to expand or enhance the relationship with your focus population. In Section 4, you will directly engage with learners from the focus population to gather information on their perceptions of CTE, communication preferences, and more.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 3: Changing the Narrative With Asset-Based Framing*.



SECTION 3

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE WITH ASSET-BASED FRAMING



Objectives

- ✓ Gain knowledge about how asset-based framing can help to ensure that program communications are not unintentionally reinforcing or creating stigma or bias around specific populations in *Video 3: Changing the Narrative With Asset-Based Framing*.
- ✓ Practice adjusting statements to be asset-based as opposed to deficit-based.
- ✓ Apply what you have learned to common statements around CTE participation and completion for specific groups in your program or institution.

Preparation

Watch *Video 3: Changing the Narrative With Asset-Based Framing* and download the video transcript.

VIDEO



TRANSCRIPT



Reframing Deficit-Based Thinking to Asset-Based Thinking Activity

Instructions

Review the deficit-based statement and identify the problem as presented and the potential reality of the systemic challenge that may exist. Then, reframe the deficit-based statement into an asset-based one, clearly defining the **contributions/aspirations** of the group, the **problem**, and a potential solution (CAPS). This learning will be applied to your focus population later in the workbook.

An asset-based approach, naming the aspirations and contributions of a group before naming any challenges they may be facing, primes collaborators for addressing systemic obstacles as opposed to thinking that the group or focus population is what needs intervention.

Current (Deficit-Based) Statement	Problem	CAPS	Asset-Based Statement
We'd offer more programs aligned to high-skill, high-wage careers, but our learners aren't interested in them.	As Presented: Learners are not interested.	Contributions/Aspirations: Have high-wage careers.	Our learners aspire to earn skills that are aligned to in-demand, high-wage careers; however, inconsistent career advising and career exploration may limit their awareness of available careers. To help provide more options to learners, we will survey them to determine their level of interest in additional program offerings aligned to high-skill, high-wage careers.
	Reality: Learners may not be aware of what is possible or available outside of current offerings or may not see themselves in these careers.	Problem: Don't always know what options are available.	
		Potential Solution: Survey learners to determine where their interest lies for additional programs.	

PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Current (Deficit-Based) Statement	Problem	CAPS	Asset-Based Statement
The engineering program is rigorous. Learners who historically struggle with academic performance are not recommended for admittance.	As Presented:	Contributions/Aspirations:	
	Reality:	Problem:	
		Potential Solution:	
English language learners often struggle in CTE programs.	As Presented:	Contributions/Aspirations:	
	Reality:	Problem:	
		Potential Solution:	
We routinely try to engage parents/guardians and families through our newsletter, but they just don't read it.	As Presented:	Contributions/Aspirations:	
	Reality:	Problem:	
		Potential Solution:	

Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

How can you help to increase the use of asset-based framing in everyday conversations and communications about the focus population's participation and success in CTE?

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ After you get to know your audience in the next section, revisit asset-based framing and apply what you have learned about barriers and obstacles to participating and achieving success in CTE to reframe any commonly used, deficit-based statements that may be used by CTE collaborators to help reduce stigma and bias.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 4: Getting to Know Your Audience*.

VIDEO



SECTION 4

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



Objectives

- ✓ Gain knowledge about the importance of learning what matters to your audience, their current perceptions of CTE, any barriers they may be experiencing, and their communication preferences in *Video 4: Getting to Know Your Audience*.
- ✓ Assess current engagement with different audiences from the focus population.
- ✓ Assess knowledge about learners and families from the focus population.
- ✓ Conduct direct engagement with learners from the focus population and compare to the assessment.

Preparation

Watch *Video 4: Getting to Know Your Audience* and download the video transcript.

VIDEO



TRANSCRIPT



Centering Learners and Families This tool prioritizes learners as the primary focus audience and families as a secondary focus audience to ensure that there are systemic improvements to engage and respond to those directly participating in CTE programs. Engagement with career-advising professionals, educators, employers, etc. is important and required by Perkins; therefore their engagement can be assessed and improved in subsequent uses of this tool.

Part 1: Getting to Know Your Audience Engagement Strategy Assessment

Instructions

Use the Engagement Strategy Mapping Tool to assess current engagement with key audiences that are part of or connected to your [focus population](#) (identified in Section 2) and to plan for additional or improved engagement.

Select a cell to place a check in the cell.

Multitiered Audience of the Focus Population	Survey/Poll	Focus Group	Committee/ Kitchen Cabinet	Training (Professional Development, Presentation)	In-Person Event	Virtual Event	Other
Learners (primary focus audience)							
Families (secondary focus audience)							
Educators							
Administrators							
Career-advising professionals							
Industry/employers							
Community leaders							
Other:							
Other:							

REFLECTION

In addition to learners and families, what are two additional audiences with which you will prioritize future engagement? Why?

Example: *Career-advising professionals because they are a trusted source of information for college and career planning.*

How are you or will you log and share the information captured during engagement?

Part 2: Audience Assessment

Instructions

This assessment narrows the focus from all audiences to learners and families from your [focus population](#). First, complete the Audience Assessment “Preengagement” column to develop a picture of what you understand to be true about these audiences. After completing the “Preengagement” assessment, engage in direct information gathering (survey, focus group, advisory group, etc.) with learners and, if possible, families from the [focus population](#) and complete the “Postengagement” column. Then, compare the two columns to determine areas of confirmation and discrepancy.

Aspect	What Matters	
	Preengagement	Postengagement
What does the audience value? (e.g., family, community, traditions, friends, economic mobility, social capital, in education)		
What does the audience need to participate in CTE? (e.g., flexibility, access to opportunities, ability to explore options, ability to earn while learning)		
What is the audience’s vision for the future for themselves or their youth? (e.g., first-generation college goer, first-generation white-collar worker, a job with family-sustaining wages, short- or long-term view, positive or negative)		
What cultural norms exist for the audience connected to participation in and/or promotion of CTE? (e.g., staying within the community, gender roles or identity, four-year college, favoritism for specific careers or fields)		

Additional resources for conducting surveys and focus groups can be found in *Advance CTE’s With Learners, Not for Learners: A Toolkit for Elevating Learner Voice* and the accompanying [supplemental materials](#). Additional resources can also be found via [state examples](#) from the Building Sustainable State Recruitment and Communications Systems to Reach Diverse Learners cohort.

Current Perceptions of CTE

Aspect	Preengagement	Postengagement
What does “CTE” mean to the audience?		
What is the audience’s experience with CTE? (e.g., historically across generations; with program faculty, staff, or administration; within the community)		

Barriers and Considerations

Aspect	Preengagement	Postengagement
How does language and/or terminology affect the audience’s connection with communications?		
What cultural norms held by the audience should be considered in recruitment communications? (e.g., gender roles, beliefs about postsecondary education, favoritism for specific career fields, staying within the community)		
How do program structure or resource barriers affect the audience’s experience with and in CTE? (e.g., transportation, technology, equipment or uniform design and costs)		
In what ways does the audience see themselves in programs and career fields? (e.g., representation among learners, educators, and administrators and in the career field; authentic representation via images, testimonials, or other means in recruitment materials)		

Communication Preferences

The Communications Audit Tool in [Section 5](#) will help you audit your current communications channels and compare them to the communication preferences of the focus audience. Refer to this section to help inform questions you may want to ask during direct engagement with the focus audience(s).

Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

What were some things from your preengagement assessment that were confirmed through direct engagement with the audience?

What were some key things that you learned during direct engagement that uncovered critical misconceptions?

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Continue direct engagement activities with learners from the focus population until you have sufficient information about what matters to them, their perceptions of CTE, any possible barriers or challenges to participation and completion they may experience, and their communication preferences.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 5: Maximizing Effective Communications*.
- ✓ Collaborate with communications team members or those in charge of CTE communications to help complete the audit in Section 5.

VIDEO



SECTION 5

MAXIMIZING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS



Objectives

- ✓ Gain knowledge about the importance of using what you have learned about your focus audience to craft and deliver communications that are effective in driving opinion and behavior change in *Video 5: Maximizing Effective Communications*.
- ✓ Assess what communication channels are being used, who is using those channels, and how the channels are being used.
- ✓ Compare current communications efforts with the communication preferences of the focus audience.
- ✓ Identify which of the focus audience's preferred channels and formats should be prioritized for future recruitment and program communications.

Communications Audit Tool

Instructions

This section will continue to focus on the preferences of learners and families within your focus population, with the option to assess additional audiences in subsequent uses of the tool. Use this audit tool to evaluate current messaging formats and channels, how these align with the preferences of the [focus population](#) and audiences (learners and families), and opportunities for future engagement.

Preparation

Watch *Video 5: Maximizing Effective Communications* and download the video transcript.



Conduct direct engagement with the focus audience to learn about their communication preferences (in Section 4).

Collaborate with communications team members or those in charge of CTE communications to help complete the audit.

Communication Channel	Channel Status	Audience for Engagement/ Targeting (educators, administrators, intermediaries, learners, families, workforce/ industry, etc.)	Where Your Focus Population Engages/ Gets Their Information	Notes
Social Media Platforms	Are you currently using these channels to communicate about CTE?	Which audiences are engaging on these channels?	Does your focus audience (learners/families) engage/get their information from these channels?	Use this space to provide any additional detail or comments about the channel or the need for additional information.
Facebook				
Instagram				
X (formerly Twitter)				
LinkedIn				
YouTube				
TikTok				
Pinterest				
Other social media (specify here)				
Other Digital Communications				
Videos				
Digital Publications and Media				
Weekly, monthly, or quarterly newsletter/eblast				
Other email media				
Digital publication—state based				
Contributions to digital publications—school based (newsletter, program brochure/one-pager, blog, etc.)				
Contributions to digital publications—community, faith, or other organization based (newsletter, blog, etc.)				
Contributions to digital publications—other				
Website				
Other digital media (specify here)				

Communication Channel	Channel Status	Audience for Engagement/ Targeting (educators, administrators, intermediaries, learners, families, workforce/ industry, etc.)	Where Your Focus Population Engages/ Gets Their Information	Notes
Print Communications				
Brochures/pamphlets/infographics				
Posters/signs				
Letters/written correspondence				
Newspaper/local magazines				
Print Communications				
Print publications—state based				
Contributions to print publications— school based (program brochure, recruitment materials, etc.)				
Contributions to print publications— community, faith, or other organization based (printed newsletter, calendar, etc.)				
Contributions to print publications—other				
Other print media (specify here)				
Events				
	Are you currently engaging in these events?	Which audiences are engaging with these events?	Does your focus audience (learners/families) engage/ get their information from these channels?	Use this space to provide any additional detail or comments about the channel or the need for additional information.
In Person (information session, career fair, other)				
Career fair				
Information session				
Career Technical Student Organization events/competitions				
Other school events/competitions				

Communication Channel	Channel Status	Audience for Engagement/ Targeting (educators, administrators, intermediaries, learners, families, workforce/ industry, etc.)	Where Your Focus Population Engages/ Gets Their Information	Notes
Events	Are you currently engaging in these events?	Which audiences are engaging with these events?	Does your focus audience (learners/families) engage/get their information from these channels?	Use this space to provide any additional detail or comments about the channel or the need for additional information.
Community-, faith-, or other organization- based events				
Sporting events (school, recreational, professional)				
Other in-person events				
Virtual (webinars, Q+A, other)				
Webinar				
Q+A sessions				
Other virtual events (specify here)				
Other				

Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

Which of the preferred communication channels and formats of the focus audience will you prioritize for future recruitment and program communications? Consider current resources and capacity within the project when determining which channels and formats to prioritize.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Ensure that the person leading the communications work connects with the communications team to determine any timelines or protocols for shifting communications to the channels identified in the previous reflection question.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 6: Developing, Tailoring, and Testing Messages*.
- ✓ Compile examples of recruitment and program communication assets in the formats identified above (flyer, brochure, program guide) to help determine current CTE recruitment messages.



SECTION 6

DEVELOPING, TAILORING, AND TESTING MESSAGES



Objectives

- ✓ Gain knowledge about how to develop, tailor, and test messages that resonate with your focus audience in *Video 6: Developing, Tailoring, and Testing Messages*.
- ✓ Develop core messages about the value of CTE that appeals to a broad audience.
- ✓ Tailor the core messages to better meet the interests and needs of the focus population, specifically learners.
- ✓ Test the messages with learners from the focus population and adjust them to make them effective for recruitment and retention.

Instructions

This section focuses on learners within your focus population, with the option to explore other audiences in subsequent uses of this tool. This section is broken into three parts: developing central and core messages that appeal to a broad audience ([Part 1](#)), tailoring core messages to better resonate with the focus population ([Part 2](#)), and testing these messages to gauge their effectiveness ([Part 3](#)). If you already have core messages and/or supporting statements, follow the links within Part 1 to navigate to later exercises within this section. The parts within this section do not need to be completed all at once, though it is recommended that they be completed in order.

Preparation

Watch *Video 6: Developing, Tailoring, and Testing Messages* and download the video transcript.

VIDEO



TRANSCRIPT



Compile some examples of recruitment and program communication assets in the formats identified in the previous section (flyer, brochure, program guide) to help determine any current CTE recruitment messages.

Refer to the [glossary](#) as needed.

Part 1: Developing Central and Core Messages and Supporting Statements

If you already have core messages for your CTE programs/systems, skip to [“Supporting Statements.”](#)

Use the following space to brainstorm the activities and outcomes of CTE that you believe matter most to the broader audience of learners and families. Ideally, you are basing these ideas on direct engagement with learners and families.

Examples: *“gain hands-on skills,” “earn family-sustaining wages.”*

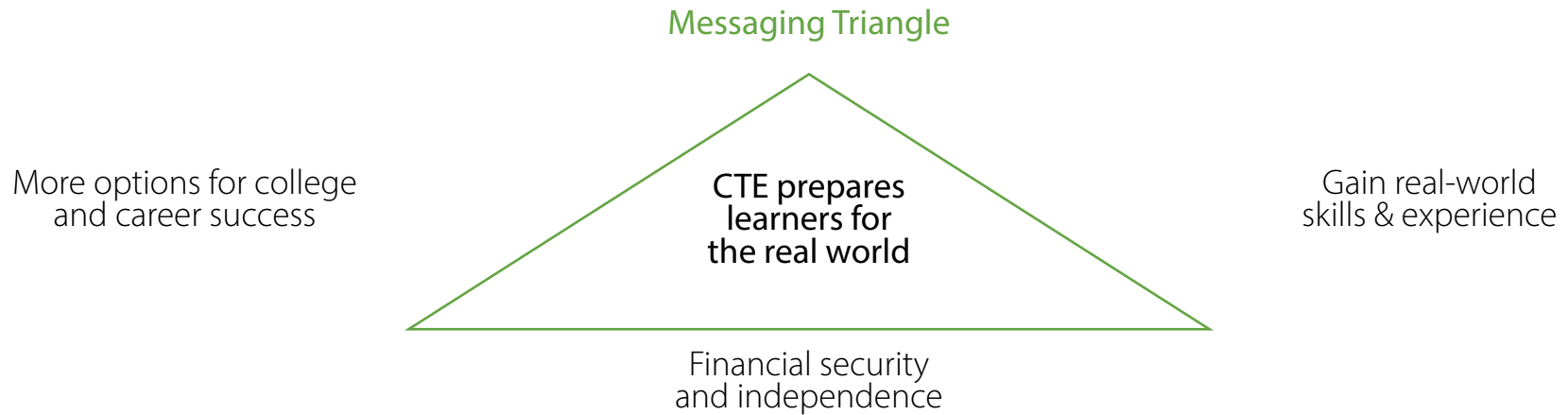
Central Message

Using the list brainstormed in the first step on Part 1, create a **central message** or theme that will serve as the center of your messaging. This statement should be broad enough to encompass the relevant aspects of CTE you have listed previously.

Example: *“CTE prepares learners for the real world” (developed based on Advance CTE research).*

Core Messages

Using the central message from the video—“CTE prepares learners for the real world”—and based on Advance CTE’s messaging research, three core messages that help provide detail as to how CTE prepares learners for the real world are: *Gain real-world skills and experience, financial security and independence, and more options for college and career success.*



Next, using the list of components of CTE brainstormed previously, develop three **core messages** that help to add detail as to how CTE delivers on the central message. These core messages should be short statements with one theme per statement.

Three Core Messages



Supporting Statements

If you already have supporting statements for your core messages, jump to "[Tailoring Messages](#)."



Supporting statements are bite-sized proof points that provide evidence to reinforce CTE's effectiveness in accomplishing what the core messages say CTE can deliver. To create these proof points, use data from learner participation and outcomes in your CTE programs.

Example:

Core Message	Supporting Statement
Gain real-world skills and experience	85% of families participating in CTE are satisfied with opportunities to gain skills in a specific field as compared to only 54% of families not participating in CTE.

Use the following space to develop your supporting statements. For each core message, strive for one to three supporting statements based on data from your CTE programs.

Core Message	Supporting Statement(s)

Part 2: Tailoring Messages

Now that you have your core messages and supporting statements, tailor both the wording and delivery of the messages and supporting statements to better match the needs and values of the learner audience from the focus population. You will want to use the previously completed [Getting to Know Your Audience Engagement Strategy Assessment and Audience Assessment Tools](#) as well as the [Communications Audit Tool](#) to help inform how you need to tailor your messages and supporting statements.

Examples of message tailoring:

Message or Dissemination	Tailor to the Specific Audience
Message: Through CTE learners gain real-world skills and experience that provide more options for college and career success and lead to financial security and independence.	<p>Specific Audience: Native American learners who are looking to contribute to the family and community immediately after graduation without leaving their community</p> <p>Tailoring: Through CTE, gain real-world skills and experience for family-sustaining wage career success within your community.</p>
Message: Enter the workforce with ready-to-apply skills and certifications for high-wage careers.	<p>Specific Audience: Latinx learners and families</p> <p>Tailoring: Translate into Spanish for Spanish speakers.</p>
Message: Gain hands-on experiences with local employers.	<p>Specific Audience: Rural learners with limited access to some programs</p> <p>Tailoring: Gain hands-on knowledge about the workplace in the classroom and beyond.</p>
and/or	
Dissemination: Messages are generally shared via email.	Tailoring: Move to texting (SMS) distribution based on learner feedback.

Assessment of Your Messages and Supporting Statements

After completing the following sections, you will have a clear idea of how to tailor your messages to answer the “What is in it for me” of your focus audience, to meet them where they are, and to share the messages via the communication channels they most trust and prefer. Use the core messages and supporting statements you drafted in [Part 1](#) of Section 6 to complete the following prompts.

Category	If Yes, How So?	If No, How Adjust/Change/ Tailor the Message?
Do the core messages and supporting statements reflect the needs, values, and preferences of your focus audience? Reference Section 4: What Matters		
Do the core messages and supporting statements help to support positive perceptions of CTE or overcome limiting perceptions of CTE held by your focus audience? Reference Section 4: Current Perceptions of CTE		
Do the core messages and supporting statements accommodate any identified barriers or considerations? Reference Section 4: Barriers and Considerations		

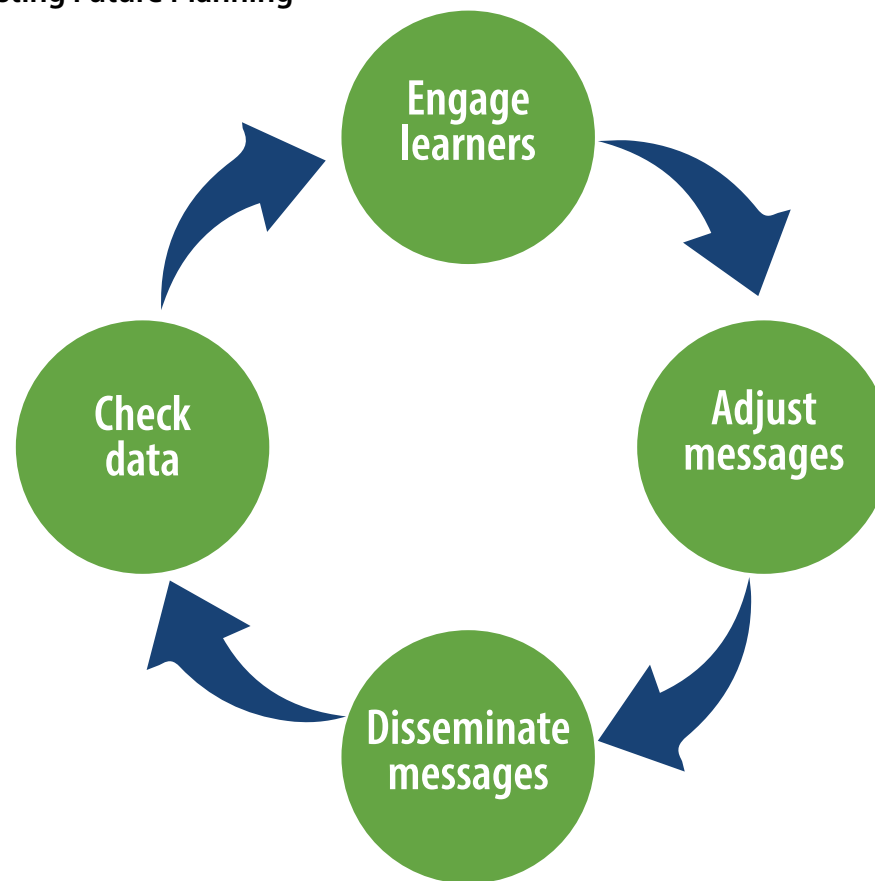
Communication Preferences

Using the [Communications Audit Tool](#), determine the best format and channel for reaching the focus audience and how you may need to tweak the messages or supporting statements to best fit the format and/or channel.

Part 3: Testing Messages

Testing messages is a continuous cycle of engaging the focus audience—in this case, learners; adjusting messages; disseminating the updated messages; checking the performance of the messages through data; and repeating. Engaging with the focus audience from the beginning, when updating or tailoring messages, can reduce the number of times you will go through this cycle. However, as audience needs change, your recruitment messages and systems also will need to change.

Learner Engagement for Message Testing Future Planning



Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

When could you further engage a wider audience of learners in a survey to broadly test their reception of program and recruitment messaging and communications?

When could you further engage learners in a focus group to help inform how well the tailored messages and communications materials are resonating with them?

What types of **short-term data** can you gather to gauge the efficacy of communications?

Examples: *social media engagement, website traffic, QR code metrics.*

Data Source	How Often Will You Check It?	Who Is Responsible?

What types of **long-term data** can you gather to gauge the efficacy of communications? **Examples:** *consolidated annual report (CAR) data, attendance at information sessions, and completion rates.*

Data Source	How Often Will You Check It?	Who Is Responsible?

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Determine how you will further engage with learners to test the efficacy of tailored messages and any changes to message format or dissemination.
- ✓ Engage with learners to gather additional feedback on the tailored messages and marketing materials.
- ✓ Revisit the [Engagement Strategy Assessment Tool](#) in Section 4 and work on tailoring messages for additional audiences who have direct contact with learners and families from the focus population (e.g., career advisors, school administrators).
- ✓ Determine how you will gauge the efficacy of tailored messages with the additional audiences.
- ✓ Record lessons learned (what worked, what did not) and any routines or actions needed to sustain the work in the [Planning and Tracking Tool](#).
- ✓ Watch *Video 7: Continuing the Work*.





Objectives

- ✓ Gain an understanding of sustaining and scaling this work in *Video 7: Continuing the Work*.
- ✓ Determine the next steps for sustaining and scaling this work.

Preparation

Watch *Video 7: Continuing the Work* and download the video transcript.

VIDEO



TRANSCRIPT



Reflection and Next Steps

REFLECTION

Based on the outcomes and lessons learned through this work, what routines do you want to build to sustain and deepen engagement with the focus audience? With additional audiences from the focus population?

What funding sources could you use to sustain and scale this work?

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Create opportunities for learners to be involved in program and recruitment decisionmaking using [With Learners, Not for Learners: A Toolkit for Elevating Learner Voice in CTE](#) as an additional resource.

Asset-based framing: Defining people by their aspirations and contributions before noting their challenges. This framing can help to reduce bias and promote a focus on systemic barriers as the problem.

Audience: The group who receives and interprets messaging.

Central message: A theme that serves as the center of the messaging triangle upon which the core messages are built.

Channel: The method for how an audience will receive a message or communication. Examples include social media, website, printed materials, in-person events, etc.

Core messages: Short statements that delve deeper into the “how” of the central theme or message.

Cultural norms: Shared beliefs or values and the human behaviors that support these values within a given society.

Deficit-based framing: Defining people by their challenges and ignoring their contributions and aspirations. This framing can increase bias and center the people as the problem, needing intervention to make them less burdensome.

Focus audience: A specific subgroup of a focus population, identified by shared characteristics (e.g., learners, families), who receive and interpret messaging and communications.

Focus population: A group of people, identified by shared characteristics, who are the focus of the engagement and recruitment efforts. The focus population may also be identified as a special population in Perkins.

Format: Type of communication, (e.g.s., digital, print, video, graphic).

Learner voice: Activities and opportunities that allow learners to have input into all aspects of their learning—in this tool, recruitment communications and structures.

Message tailoring: Adjusting messages to better meet the needs and preferences of a particular audience. Tailoring can include adjusting the language, terminology, format, and/or dissemination channel of the message.

Supporting statements: Statements that contain data points that help to support core messages and can be tailored to specific audiences.

Multitiered audience: The multiple audiences that exist within any given population including but not limited to learners, families, educators, community members, community leaders, etc.

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